



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewer: Andrew Schalkwyk

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ANDREW SCHALKWYK: OK. Today is the 1st of December. I am with Mrs. Rose N. Kafeero, the deputy secretary for the Public Service Commission in Uganda, at the Public Service Commission's offices in Kampala. Before we start the interview, can I ask that you've given your consent for this interview?

ROSE N. KAFEERO: *Yeah, I have.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. So I'd like to begin this conversation by talking about the role that you've played in the civil service and your experience with the civil service reform in Uganda. Could you tell me about what you do now, your responsibilities and the jobs that have brought you to this position?

KAFEERO: *OK. So you want my history?*

SCHALKWYK: Very briefly, and what you do now.

KAFEERO: *OK, I started as a personnel officer right from university, think that would be equivalent to human resource management officer. Then I grew up to senior personnel officer, principal personnel officer. Then from there I was offered accelerated promotion to commissioner. That is head of department. That's when I moved to Ministry of Public Service. And that was 1999. Then from there I was appointed or transfer of service to deputy secretary. Oh, before that I had been promoted to director in ministry of public service. Then in the same year I moved DS, deputy secretary. It's almost equivalent level. Though the responsibilities are a little bit higher.*

SCHALKWYK: All right. And what are your current responsibilities?

KAFEERO: *Now mainly I deputize. This post is a little bit unique in that the topmost executive is the secretary to the Public Service Commission. I deputize the secretary to the Public Service Commission. But at the same time I'm also head of department. So I head the Department of Monitoring and Guidance. We have two departments here, two technical departments. One is Monitoring and Guidance, one is Administration and Finance. But we also have a smaller unit called Selection Systems Department. But soon it is going to join the Monitoring and Guidance Department. This Department is mainly the secretariat of the Commission. Serves as the secretariat of the Commission. But as the Public Service Commission has wider roles than recruitment, selection, that is administering the entire HR function. However, we also go beyond. We also coordinate and guide district service commissions. These are the smaller recruitment agencies in each of the districts. There are now over 80 districts. So we guide and coordinate the activities of that. So that is my responsibility, to also guide the districts in the HR function.*

SCHALKWYK: So I wonder if I could ask you some questions about the Public Service Commission. Could you tell me its structure? Could you describe the structure for me?

KAFEERO: *The Public Service Commission is a constitutional body established under the Constitution of Uganda. Its main function is to recruit, discipline and carry out other human resource management functions for the Government of Uganda (GOU). It does not deal with policy. It deals with implementation. Because policy is handled by the Ministry of Public Service. In addition, it is mandated as I said to guide and coordinate the activities of the district service commission. The structure of the Public Service Commission is we have the Public Service*

Commission, the board -- maybe you'd equate it to a board -- which has nine members, including a chairperson and a deputy chairperson. These are appointed directly by the president and they are approved by Parliament. And these I would say are more or less political appointees. Then we have the secretariat, which services that Commission. The secretariat is composed of a secretary, it's headed by the secretary, and the deputy, who is me. Then it has as I said three departments, Monitoring and Guidance, and Selection Systems, and then Finance and Administration. We are a fairly small body of about 140 people, including support staff.

SCHALKWYK: All right. Have there been any changes in the Public Service Commission as part of public service reforms?

KAFEERO: *Not really. Not really. I think the Public Service Commission has remained -- since its mandate is under the Constitution, not much has changed because of reform. What has changed for example in the mandate is because of the changes in government policy. Like 1995 there was a review of the Constitution and because of that the Commission got more executive roles than before. You see, the Public Service Commission was established in 1955. It has existed since then. But during the review of the Constitution some of its powers were taken away while others were added. And because of this review we have now got more powers to recruit for example the chief executives of the districts. Those are called the chief administrative officers. Before they were being recruited by the individual district service commission. But at the same time that review created other constitutional commissions that handle specific cadres like the health. There's a Health Service Commission. There is now Education Service Commission. It was there before, but the powers were streamlined during that time. So that we have other sister commissions. Then the Public Service Commission remained with overall responsibility for the public servants that are not under these other constitutional commissions.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. How are the members of the secretariat chosen?

KAFEERO: *They're recruited by the Public Service Commission. They're recruited just like any other cadre. And most of the secretariat staff, especially the technical staff, are HR professionals that are recruited generally when the service is recruiting HR professionals. Then they are identified and posted, the Public Service Commission. So we don't recruit our own staff. Except now the deputy secretary. And the secretary is a permanent secretary. Is at the level of a permanent secretary. So I'm at the level of a deputy permanent secretary.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. So could you talk a bit more about the powers, functions and responsibilities that the Public Service Commission has?

KAFEERO: *OK. I need then to refer to something more detailed. Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. Now the functions of the Public Service Commission are mainly to advise the president in performance of his functions of appointing, disciplining officers that are below head of department -- above head of department, sorry. Then the Public Service Commission handles the rest of the staff below head of department. Then it also appoints, confirms in appointment and exercises disciplinary control over persons holding offices in the public service, other than those that I've mentioned that are under other constitutional commissions. It also has a role in reviewing terms and conditions of service, standing orders, training, qualifications of public officers, and matters connected with human resource management. But this is not done directly. We identify where there are areas that need review. Then we make recommendations. The Public Service*

Commission makes recommendations to government through the minister of public service. Then we also guide and coordinate the work of district service commission. And then the Public Service Commission, unlike other constitutional commissions, hears and determines appeals and grievances from persons who are aggrieved by decisions of those other commissions. So we actually report directly to Parliament each year on the performance of our functions. I think that is broadly the work of the Public Service Commission.

SCHALKWYK: OK. So the president has the power to appoint above the deputy director --

KAFEERO: *On advice of the Public Service Commission.*

SCHALKWYK: All right. And so how does that process work? Do you provide a short list? Or do you provide specific names? Or does the president present you with people who you then suggest?

KAFEERO: *OK. Now normally all posts in the public service are advertised. And when we advertise, then the Commission goes through a recruitment process. The normal recruitment process for permanent secretaries, we do both an oral exam, they do a written test, they do an in-tray, and through all of those methods we identify the suitable persons who are recommended to the president. The president is free to refuse or accept, but it is very rare for the president to refuse. Having gone through all that.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. And then for the lower positions you go through a similar process but you do the appointments?

KAFEERO: *More or less similar process. Advert or through recommendation by the responsible permanent secretary.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. So how much say does a minister or a permanent secretary have over his or her own staff within the ministry?

KAFEERO: *OK. As you may note, the Public Service Commission only handles issues that are submitted to it. So the day-to-day management of staff is by the permanent secretary. The Public Service Commission only acts on recommendation of an individual permanent secretary.*

SCHALKWYK: And what is your relationship with the Ministry for Public Service?

KAFEERO: *Now the Ministry of Public Service -- fortunately we have -- originally the relationship was not very clear. But now the Public Service Commission Act has been enacted by Parliament.*

SCHALKWYK: When was that?

KAFEERO: *That was -- the effective date is 30th October.*

SCHALKWYK: This year.

KAFEERO: *Yes. Originally we would operate under the Constitution, but the relationship was not very clearly streamlined. So because we both handle the HR function, they deal mostly with the policy. We deal mostly with execution. Like recruitment. Very clear, the posts for example in case of recruitment. Very clear the posts, they approve that for example a certain ministry fills a certain number of vacancies, then we handle the processing of that recruitment. But we work*

within overall government policy. And for example when we come to review terms and conditions of service, they can initiate a document which the Commission looks at. And once the Commission is happy that it has taken care of all the concerns of public officers then they can list. So we are more or less -- we coordinate. While they handle the policy we handle the execution. But we belong to one sector. We belong to the Public Service Management Sector, which was also created recently.

SCHALKWYK: So you are part of those meetings. And who attends those?

KAFEERO: *The meetings, they are technical people. We have technical people. I attend. The undersecretary attends. Depending on the issue under -- if it is to formulate a budget framework paper the higher people attend. If it is a technical issue the lower people attend.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. The independence of the Public Service Commission is often an important and difficult aspect of organizations, these organizations around the world. How effectively is the independence of the Commission protected in Uganda?

KAFEERO: *First and foremost, we are protected by the law, because the Constitution itself of the country states clearly that the Public Service Commission and other commissions are independent and not subject to any other authority. Then we have the principles, the values and principles that we uphold. And I believe actually it is the law that protects us more at the end. And then we can formulate our own regulations. We can determine our own processes on how we deal with for example cases of appointment. The Public Service Commission has its own processes, but which are made known to the public. We issue guidelines. So we are actually fairly independent. And we are very independent in our decisions.*

SCHALKWYK: All right. Well, what role do commissioners play? What are their responsibilities?

KAFEERO: *Sorry?*

SCHALKWYK: What are the responsibilities of commissioners?

KAFEERO: *Of the commissioners?*

SCHALKWYK: Yeah.

KAFEERO: *The members of the Commission? Normally the secretariat processes for example a submission to make sure that it is complete, to make sure that it conforms to all the government policies and regulations, because these are not technical people. Theirs is to sit on their boards, interview, then they sit every -- like this Commission sits every Friday to make the final decisions. Because they work independently as boards, but then the final decision, they need to come together and make a final decision. Even on appeals and all other issues that come before the Commission. The final decision is that commission's, the one that makes the final decision on all these cases.*

SCHALKWYK: All right --

KAFEERO: *And all the nine members are full-time.*

SCHALKWYK: Yeah. All right. And are they involved in the interviewing of --

KAFEERO: Yeah. They chair the boards, yeah, specifically they chair the boards. Then the secretariat gives the technical advice on HR issues. But also on each individual board there must be a technical representative of the organization that actually is going to use the particular person.

SCHALKWYK: OK. So you described them as political appointees.

KAFEERO: Yeah, because they're appointed by the president and approved by Parliament. So actually they are. And for the Public Service Commission they even take into account regional balance. That each region at least must have a member. You have one from the north, one or two or three. So that regional balance, that's why I would say they are actually political appointees. But most of these are people of a background such that they have either worked in some parastatal or public organization, not actually very like businessmen or -- they must be technical in some field somewhere. And these are mostly retired or at least elderly people.

SCHALKWYK: Is there ever concern from minority parties that they give decisions that are influenced by politics?

KAFEERO: The minority parties? Actually we don't actually even look there. The Public Service Commission does not listen to such things. Because the Public Service Commission actually acts on merit. Even if a person from a minority party is the best. In fact we don't even have anything that -- even in our forms, even when we are interviewing, that somehow brings out the political or the belief of a person. So by the time the person comes to be interviewed we don't know his political background or party and we don't wish to know. The Commission would not go into that. So actually for the Public Service Commission I don't think there has been a lot of complaints. They may be there outside, but they are not actually official complaints. Because I have worked in the Public Service Commission before. I started in the Commission around -- I joined the service in 1982. And after two years I was brought to the Commission. I worked in the Commission up to 1992. Then I left and went to other ministries, then came back 2004. But all this time I think we have had if at all -- because that would -- the indicator would have been the appeals we get. We have never gotten an appeal on basis of -- on that ground in the last ten or so years I have worked.

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk to me about the appeals process?

KAFEERO: The appeals process. OK, let me start for example if a person is from the district. The district service commission is a separate -- is an independent body that appoints people in the local government. If a person is aggrieved by the decision of the district service commission, is not satisfied, thinks it was unfair, he wasn't given -- because there a number of -- we have guided the districts on how they should operate. And if for example a person has not been given a chance to be hired and he first writes to the Public Service Commission -- to the district service commission, sorry -- and they are free to review that decision. In case he feels that justice will not be done in the district he is free to write to the Public Service Commission. Before the act came into force it was even acceptable not to give a copy to the district service commission. But now we require that the person should give at least a copy. If he hasn't passed that appeal through his responsible office, that he should at least give a copy. So on receipt of the appeal, the Public Service Commission writes back -- at least tries to make a contact with the district service commission, and then gets their side of the story, and gets -- requests the district service commission to bring all the relevant documents pertaining to the case. The technical staff or the secretariat study the

responses and then make a final brief to the Public Service Commission, which sits, and then looks at it. And if there is a feeling that something is lacking or the person needs to be heard in person, that person will be invited, and then is heard, and if there is any information that he is to bring he brings it. The Commission looks at it and then makes a final decision. However, should the Commission get new information that was not before it at the time the earlier decision was made, then the Commission can get that information and review its earlier decision. Then on conclusion of this entire process the district service commission is now advised either to rescind the earlier decision or any other action as appropriate. So that is the process.

SCHALKWYK: Does the Commission try and communicate directly with the public about the role that it plays?

KAFEERO: *Not so much. I think that is an area where the Public Service Commission hasn't done very much. No we only communicate when it's necessary, for example when we have to contact a candidate. But actually this public relations sort of thing, though now we are coming up with a client charter, and we want to improve that area.*

SCHALKWYK: So I wonder if I could talk to you a bit about your experience with the Public Service Reform Programme as it has been carried out in Uganda. What were the major challenges that it sought to address?

KAFEERO: *Major challenges. OK. Maybe I would like first of all to highlight what role I have played in the --*

SCHALKWYK: Certainly.

KAFEERO: *I have been in the service since I think the reforms started. I was there before the reforms were introduced. As I told you, I was working in the Commission and other ministries. And as you may be aware, the public service, because of the political turmoil that Uganda went through, there was sort of a breakdown in most of the systems and processes.*

SCHALKWYK: When was this?

KAFEERO: *This was between -- in the '80s. In the '80s. Because I joined the service in 1982. At that time things had started breaking down. So by 1986 when the NRM (National Resistance Movement) government came into power I was again in the service. And the reforms did not start until a little bit in 1992. But where the reform started was about cleaning the service of nonperformers. So before systems were now -- before this process of now introducing new systems, more efficient systems, there was a first cleaning up excess staff, ghosts. And at that time I was in a ministry as a head of personnel department. And so I wasn't much in the thick and thin of the public service reform. I was neither an architect nor one of the first people. So my deepest involvement with the Public Service Reform Programme was mainly when I joined the public service in 1999. And there I was posted to the Department of [Public Service] Inspection. Mostly to handle, monitor the implementation of HR, efficiency, effectiveness. But when I joined there it was also more or less an audit sort of thing. How many people are on the payroll? But fortunately I came in when a new management approach was being introduced that was results-oriented management (ROM). So I straightaway was assigned to be a coordinator for that exercise. The consultants had been hired, but they did not know our situation on the ground. So I worked with them. That was more or less towards the end of the design stage. So we*

had to work with them so that we design it in such a way that it would somehow be simple for the ordinary public officer to understand where we are coming from and where we are going. So when I came in, they were still piloting. And we worked through the pilot 1987, '88. I came in '89. That was the pilot stage.

SCHALKWYK: Where were they piloting?

KAFEERO: *They were piloting in five ministries and five districts. So we continued with the pilot. And mine, I was now the overall coordinator for that program. So that's where I'm coming from. Then from there I came here. And someone else has now taken over. But can you repeat your question? Because now --*

SCHALKWYK: So what were the main challenges that they were trying to --

KAFEERO: *Now the main challenges I can see. I will now more or less concentrate on introducing that new concept of management. Because other areas have been handled. Then I'll maybe go to the general areas. But specifically for results-oriented management there was that fear of change, which is generally what happens in any organization. People were used to doing things in their own way. They were used to maximizing budgets, finishing all the money, whether you have got value for money or not. But then here we were now telling them that you have to work towards results. You have to show outputs, you have to budget, you have to defend your budget. Because we were working hand in hand with the Ministry of Finance. So that at the end of the day it's like we were now destabilizing the way how people had got used to doing things. And as a result ROM became very very unpopular. Actually even in the Ministry of Public Service. That's why I said some of these are my own views, but they are really collective views, that even in the Ministry of Public Service itself, people did not want to change. So we had a ROM unit. It was called a central ROM unit. With a number of officers who had been trained by the consultant on how to implement ROM and design and whatever. And this was the unit I was heading. But this unit was drawing people from each and every ministry. We had a central unit but we also had ROM facilitators in each and every ministry. And these were not the most popular people. Because these were people saying do things differently, you have to have an output, you have to have a mission. So we went round first sensitizing people on how to actually come up with a mission, objectives, outputs. We were going round the entire country, even districts. It wasn't very very popular. It was like you are hitting against a wall saying what is new. These are the things we were doing. So every time you had to convince people that there was something new. We had to concentrate on trying to sell ourselves by emphasizing the benefits at every time you had to change an approach, depending on the institution where you are going. And in many cases the chief executives of these institutions were the people who were resisting. If for example the chief was a little bit -- well, would welcome us -- then the staff would also frustrate us. So and also another challenge was most of the chief executives are very busy persons. For example here if you had wanted to see the secretary maybe it would have taken you a week. They are very very busy persons. So they would not actually -- while they had been sensitized on these reforms and -- there was a problem that they didn't have the time to get personally involved. So the leadership there was a little bit of a problem. It was a very very big challenge. From the leadership of the Ministry of Finance, maybe from the national leader, the president, the ministers, yet they had been sensitized about -- because before the pilot started the policy had been sold to government. Ministers were sensitized. The permanent secretaries were sensitized. And they agreed that this should work. But when it came to actual practice it was a different story.*

Now that was worsened by the Ministry itself. Where your colleagues whom you are supposed to work with, technical people, are also not receptive to the new approach. So that was a very very big challenge. The other challenge was --

SCHALKWYK: Who developed the ROM program?

KAFEERO: *OK. The consultants were called in.*

SCHALKWYK: By whom?

KAFEERO: *By the Ministry of Public Service. Let me say by government. Because Ministry of Public Service is the arm of government. However, before they came in there had been a commission that had been set up by government to review, look at the problems in the service, and recommend ways of improving the service. So that review was the Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission. Had recommended ROM as a new management style. And after that it was up to the Ministry of Public Service now to actualize how ROM worked. And so the Ministry of Public Service met the consultants -- terms of reference for the consultants. And the consultant came in to try and now design something that would not actually maybe borrow -- we would borrow from other countries like New Zealand, like -- but then we wanted something that would suit our own circumstances. So and as I speak now it has again changed. Again changed in its form. So people actually somehow did not take it kindly. It was as if it was something from outside.*

The other challenge was the way people were viewing reforms at that time. Remember reforms had started in 1992 with the promise that the service would be reduced. But then pay and other tools would be improved. Now here we are coming in 1997 up to now saying use a new management approach. Budget according to results. But other systems had not changed. Pay had not improved. So and somehow already fatigue was coming in. People were saying we don't see anything in it. People were removed. But still ghosts are there on the payroll. People were removed so that we are better tooled, but even at that time there were no people -- did not even have a simple computer. Even by 1999. And when I went to public service my office didn't have even a computer, no. Yet we had been trained. So those are the things that the sequencing of reforms was also a challenge. In that things that were supposed to happen at the same time did not happen. And that brought a little bit of frustration. So it was a challenge for these people who are in the thick of this reform to introduce even more changes. Because people would not see the benefits of any change.

SCHALKWYK: So when you were trying to get people on board with results-oriented management, what worked well to try and persuade people to do it?

KAFEERO: *I don't know. Maybe I would say the approach in the way -- also our approach, the approach we are using. As I told you, our beginning was you would appeal to the benefits, because -- and one, the fact that we were involving -- we had a ROM unit, which was in Ministry of Public Service, but then we had ROM facilitators, like ambassadors. Within the ministries, who were understanding. They would understand the local situation in that ministry. But if I may say it was 50/50 -- there are some ministries that actually received us very well and where it worked. So because we did a review and out of the ten ministries at least four had -- at least because the first indicator we wanted, has the institution now got a mission, is it clear on its objectives, are they in black and white, can you come even at the inception that you have a mission that is written that is known. So*

those were -- we did a review in the beginning and those were the things we were looking for. Because remember this was a new management approach. So we had to move slowly. You start with putting the structure, the framework in place. And by the time I left we were still struggling with that framework in 2004. Though now other things have come on board. So I think the way we did it, by starting small with just a framework, in a way worked. In some of the ministries.

In other ministries it has worked for some time, but then after some time it died out. Especially after the ROM facilitators we had trained left. Because it also depended on the person who was identified for us. In some ministries they identified very very good people. Energetic, dynamic, and they were able to drive the process. Because remember we could not drive it from Ministry of Public Service. And that approach we also didn't want to be seen that it was being driven from somewhere else. So in some ministries it worked. In others it didn't work.

And then we had -- I may also maybe give credit to the consultants we worked with at first. Because what they did, they came and trained that central ROM unit, then they left. And I also as head of that unit, I made sure that in the next phase we were not using consultants per se, we were doing it ourselves. So when we would go talk to our colleagues they would see us as colleagues, not as consultants. So as much as possible we would leave the consultant in the background, go and do the work ourselves. And I think some of the members of the central ROM unit are still there now. At least two, about two, three. And they now can drive the process. Though the work has become more complex.

SCHALKWYK: And the consultants, were those local consultants or were they from abroad?

KAFEERO: *This was KPMG [Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler].*

SCHALKWYK: From Uganda.

KAFEERO: *No, from -- OK, I think they're partly -- KPMG is international. But they gave us a person who was an African from Kenya. And he was very good as a person. And he was not selfish. He passed on whatever. Yeah so eventually even the ROM guide we developed. We developed a facilitator's guide. We were able to do a number of things on our own from his own mentoring and coaching. He actually mentored us and coached us.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. So how exactly did the ROM process work?

KAFEERO: *OK. The way it worked at that time -- because now a few things have changed -- they are trying to make it more practical. But we started from a theoretical sort of point of view. By developing a mission, then developing from that mission we developed objectives for each organization, together with the staff of that and the management of the organization. Then you develop the outputs. Then down eventually to the activities. And then you have the performance indicators.*

SCHALKWYK: What sort of performance indicators did you use?

KAFEERO: *I don't know. I don't know what you want to hear, but what do I say? Output? Outcome? Both. Output and outcome. But at that level we would actually come up with both. At the higher level the outcome. Then at the lower level the output indicators.*

SCHALKWYK: OK. Was this also extended to individuals?

KAFEERO: *No that's where they are now.*

SCHALKWYK: OK.

KAFEERO: *Because those years in that phase you remember we had the pilot phase for a number of -- about three years. Then we would look at what hasn't worked and then try to -- we now try to spread, because we started at the strategic level. The PS (permanent secretaries) and heads of department. Hoping that these PSs and heads of department would cascade it down to the lower levels. But by the time I left we were still at the strategic. And a little bit in some ministries we had gone down a little bit. But not up to the individual level. The individual level has now been tackled. Because I still attend the reform meetings. Because even here I'm also task manager now for the Public Service Commission. But I think now this is coming in through the new performance appraisal system. Where individuals set their own objectives in line with the department and the ministry objectives. But by that time it was still at PS level, heads of department, and a few big units.*

SCHALKWYK: And if you were to go back again back to 1998 and 1999 what would you do differently?

KAFEERO: *I don't know whether I would do anything differently. In my view -- I may be biased -- I think we did what we can given the circumstances. Because if we had started at a lower level, any new change needs leadership. So for us we think targeting the leaders of the ministry, the chief executive was the best way. We could not have brought this in. Our culture, the culture of Ugandans -- I'm not saying Africa -- is more or less authoritative. So we had to exploit the culture that people know, that if the person in authority, you are with him, then it is easier to get the people down, than starting from down. I don't think I would have wanted a system where we come in full-blast. It wouldn't work. And actually here in Uganda it doesn't work. You have to start from somewhere, get a few champions, then come down. So I don't know whether I would do anything -- what I would do differently maybe is I would have involved Ministry of Finance more. Because ROM without budgeting is almost nothing. But at that time we tried but also the leadership that we had there was not very receptive too. But we tried. And maybe I would have gone back again to the topmost leader, the political, so that in a way it is something that is being seen as being driven by the president himself. I understand in other countries like Kenya I think it may work eventually because the president is seen also to be behind. Which doesn't happen here. Maybe I would have gone back and again every time I move a step I again go back so that all the way we are with the political leaders. But at some time we put them aside and we concentrated on the technical.*

SCHALKWYK: So do you think there was a lack of political support?

KAFEERO: *It wasn't actually -- I cannot say lack. It wasn't adequate. It was there, but it wasn't adequate. The PS tried. And at that time also the structure in Ministry of Public Service was a little bit -- it wasn't very supportive of that change. Because there was a reform secretariat, there was a ministry. Here was a ROM coordinator reporting to both the permanent secretary and the head of public service, the deputy head of public service, who was secretary of administrative reform. So sometimes you would not know where to go in case you have a challenge, because here you are reporting to the PS and the deputy, but here you are -- when you are doing the reform issues, then you go to the head. He is not your day-to-day supervisor. So there was also a challenge, it was also a*

challenge. But now the structure has been streamlined. And now administrative reform has been streamlined into the Ministry. So now the reporting is a little bit clear.

SCHALKWYK: So what do you think that ROM was able to achieve?

KAFEERO: ROM, I think one, it was the mindset. I think that is -- it may be contested, but for me I think the mindset of public officers has changed. From focus on activities, on maximizing budgets, to outputs. And this was also supported by the Finance and Public Accountability Act 2000. Because once the law came in place and then also the budget guidelines changed, people started budgeting using outputs. And I think even up to today people are now more -- when you talk about outputs people understand. Those days you would have said but what are you talking about. People are concentrating on activities. So I think ROM changed a little bit of the mindset. The Ministry of Public Service itself, there never used to be reviews, quarterly reviews. You would get the money. At the end of the year you account. That is the end. But I think somehow it also brought into focus the issue of accountability for public resources and accountability for outputs, accountability for even activities. Because now people focus on what at the end of the day they should achieve, what the impact should be. It is not so much. But at least that was a beginning of that realization, that people should not just come to office and spend time reading newspapers, because at the end of the day you have to account for whatever. There was also that aspect that people used to cry about very little money, underfunding, but wherever we would go we would ask them, that little, what have you done with it. And I think that one has also sunk into the minds of people. They may not want to admit it but I believe it is there now. That people know even if I'm in a dry ministry, that dry ministry has to produce something. That wasn't there. That wasn't there.

SCHALKWYK: I wonder if I could ask you a little bit -- couple questions about the district service commissions.

KAFEERO: Yeah you may. If I am able to answer I will answer.

SCHALKWYK: Certainly. So is there a commission for every district?

KAFEERO: Yeah.

SCHALKWYK: And their responsibilities are for hiring what level of staff?

KAFEERO: Hiring from head of department to below. Except the chief executive who is the chief administrative officer.

SCHALKWYK: And who is he appointed by?

KAFEERO: Recruited by the Public Service Commission.

SCHALKWYK: The Public Service Commission. OK, and their responsibilities are similar to the Public Service Commission? The national Public Service Commission?

KAFEERO: More or less except handling appeals. They don't handle appeals. Then the Public Service Commission has other bodies which must consult us. We appoint other people, like the Electoral Commission, they must consult us before they recruit their staff. There are other additional responsibilities that the district

service commissions don't have. In addition their members are not at equivalent level of our members.

SCHALKWYK: And how are their members chosen?

KAFEERO: Now the members of district service commission, there is a law, the local government act, where it is stipulated the requirements of how you can be a member of the district service commission. But they are identified by council -- yeah, by the councils.

SCHALKWYK: The local government.

KAFEERO: The local councils.

SCHALKWYK: And the district service commissions cover the --

KAFEERO: Now they're identified by council. First by the council has a top -- they call it district executive committee. The district executive committee identifies these people. There is no advert. More or less -- there is a problem there maybe which I will highlight later. So and then their own advice of the CAO also, the chief administrative officer, on the technical qualifications of that member. And then the district executive committee presents the names in council, the full council. Then the council approves. Then they're sent to the public service commission for final approve. So the final approval is for the public service commission.

SCHALKWYK: How frequently does the Public Service Commission not approve people?

KAFEERO: Huh?

SCHALKWYK: How often does the Public Service Commission not approve people for district service commissions?

KAFEERO: I don't know. It depends. If they don't meet the qualifications. They may meet the technical -- what is set out in the law, because they are supposed to have an A-level or high school certificate and a diploma. That is the minimum. And then they are supposed to be persons of high moral character and integrity. And I think that is the main one. And they should not be public officers. Or members of a political organ. So once those are satisfied down there the Public Service Commission interviews, interfaces. We have an interface with them. Set aside a day every Thursday when the nominees are met by the Public Service Commission. They're interviewed on general, general issues. But also to bring out their backgrounds. Originally the districts would just identify, send here their CVs, then if they satisfy the academic and other qualifications. But then we realized that this was a problem. People would come in. They cannot even -- they don't have communication skills. And yet their main work there is to interview. And the person who cannot even present himself before the Public Service Commission of a few members, how do you expect him to? Then some of them you would find that as you interact, you find out a few things about them. Then they don't approve. There are districts like we have one district where I think we have rejected their people for about two years. Until recently when the Commission decided that the LC5 [Uganda is divided administratively into 45 Districts (LC5) which are further subdivided into Counties (Counties in turn are divided into constituencies [LC4]), Sub-counties (LC3), Parishes (LC2) and Villages (LC1).] chairperson, that is the political head of the district, we called here and sensitized on what requirements on what people should look for. And

these people must not have had any bad record if they were civil servants or wherever they were working.

SCHALKWYK: When you're recruiting people for the public service, do you ever struggle to find people who are qualified?

KAFEERO: *Actually we do that every day. We struggle. But then there are some areas where you cannot actually get qualified people.*

SCHALKWYK: Like which areas?

KAFEERO: Yes?

SCHALKWYK: Which areas are those?

KAFEERO: *For example I would say even secretaries. You may not get qualified people. Engineers, there are also issues. Then of recent the systems analyst, because they are marketable.*

SCHALKWYK: IT people.

KAFEERO: *Yeah, IT people. They are marketable. But these days at least that one has improved a bit. Then even the chief administrative officers. Because we want to get people who are qualified who have experience in local governance and local government work. And they are not there. Actually we have a very high vacancy rate. They're also now becoming a critical skill. Though they are payroll administrators, but the experience to manage a district is very necessary. And we don't have these people. There are not very many. Because the districts are growing much more than would have been anticipated. Then we have some areas like the geologists in Ministry of Energy [and Mineral Development]. Now recently there is this introduction of the Petroleum [Exploration and Production] Department. And we don't have people who are qualified in that area. Then there are some competence areas or there are some cadres where we get the people but they don't stay. There are those who are difficult to recruit, but then there are those areas which are difficult to retain.*

SCHALKWYK: And which are those and why are they difficult to retain?

KAFEERO: *State attorneys. It's the law. They prefer to go to the private. I may speak about the doctors, though you don't recruit them, but I know for a fact that it is very difficult to retain them, mainly because of pay.*

SCHALKWYK: And the Health Service Commission recruits that.

KAFEERO: *Yeah that is for the Health Service. But for us yeah it's the state attorneys. The state lawyers. That area. They are very very difficult to retain. We get very many now when we recruit, but the average stay is three years. Because probation here, probation is two years. Then most people after their probation leave. Then there are other areas where once people are trained go. Even HR now. Once, because HR trains a lot of people. And once they are trained they go. Then we have in Ministry of Public Service the management analysts. Because I think now they participate in a lot of restructuring and they consult. Now many of the consultancies grab them. So there are some of those areas where you get, but difficult to retain. Then there are those areas where difficult to recruit. Then in the ministry that handles lands and housing, the architects, those are people who train for a long period, but they are very difficult to retain [Ministry*

of Lands, Housing & Urban Development]. And they are also difficult to attract. There is a cadre known as the palynologists. They are also in ministry of -- the geology-related things. They are also very difficult. So there are cadres that are very difficult to retain.

SCHALKWYK: Why do you think this is? Is it mainly because of pay?

KAFEERO: The issue of pay is very very crucial because the market rates are higher than the public service rates. Two, the issue of training, the training institutions, there is no coordination at the moment between the Service Commission, Ministry of Public Service, and training institutions. So some of these areas and the output from the university is lower than the requirement by the public service. So that is -- I think there is that mismatch between the requirements of the public service and then the output by the universities. For example until recently I think the universities were not recruiting surveyors, and that area is actually badly off, that you have the top, you have the second in command, but in the middle you have nobody. Then we have now the ones who have just come out of the university. So in between there, the people with experience are not there. Because their training ground was in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It is now very recent that I think the first output will be either this year or next year. So there is that shortage.

SCHALKWYK: Have there been any attempts to increase pay or increase the attractiveness of careers in the public service?

KAFEERO: I think the ministry of public service, they could answer that one best. But from my own experience when I was there, there was that realization that pay -- and it was part of the plan for the public service reform. So they have what they call a pay reform strategy, but that strategy is not working very well from my own point of view. There were certain targets by this year pay should have risen like this. The compression ratio should have been like this. The differentials should have been like this from scale to scale. But this has not been realized. Well, the actual amounts in a way have gone up. One, the standard of living has also -- what is given here is eaten up by inflation. On top of that, because of those areas, the hard to attract areas like the science, the president has tended to -- the head of the country has tended to favor those areas that are very hard to attract. And giving them higher pay. But in my view, in my own estimation, the performance of those areas, of those other cadres, has not actually matched the increase in pay. For example lawyers are now getting higher pay than the general public service pay. But the court cases, the pending court cases, have not gone down. Corruption, if you read the recent report of the IGG (Inspector General of Government), is actually going up. So I think there are more complex issues that need to be resolved other than pay. But actually pay is one of those things. Pay is one of -- it hasn't actually gone down. And the more the differential pay is introduced, the more the rest of the service gets frustrated, and the more people leave. Or the more people become corrupt because they say OK, these people got an increase. But also remember that for example a lawyer or a doctor works with an office attendant, works with a cleaner, works -- a records assistant. And if the patient's records are not in order then it makes work for the doctor also. So I think also that one is a problem. There is pay. There is also retooling. Some ministries are not very well retooled. That retooling aspect of the Public Service Reform Programme hasn't moved the way it was expected to. I know that there are some ministries where they're still using typewriters or they're using computers as typewriters, not using them as IT gadgets or something like that. So I think that area also hasn't moved very well.

SCHALKWYK: Does the public know about the Public Service Reform Programme?

KAFEERO: *Yeah, I think there has been -- of recent there has been a big attempt to make publications like this, put them in newspapers. I think there has been a -- I think the public knows. But the informed public. Not maybe the businesspeople. But in the past ten years or so it was more or less an inside thing. People were hearing about reforms. Even civil servants. And they would not identify that this is an area under reform or this is an area under the general streamlined public service operation. But of recent there has been an attempt to introduce and to develop a communications strategy. And slowly I think. Because that was also realized as one of the problems, that the communications area, the information and education, communication about reforms wasn't very strong.*

SCHALKWYK: Do you think that that'll affect the reform process?

KAFEERO: *I think it will. Only that I hope it hasn't come too late. Because there is now reform fatigue. Generally. Generally there is a reform fatigue.*

SCHALKWYK: What do you think has worked well in the reform in managing the reform?

KAFEERO: *In managing the reform? I don't know. What has worked well, I think there is more -- I don't know whether it is because of the reform or government, but I think when I look at areas where the reform -- like the reduction in size, like the review of structures, because that is all part of the public service -- I'm not talking about the other reforms -- the review of structures and the streamlining of functions, I think there has been an improvement there. There was a lot of duplication before. I think that one in a way has worked in some areas. Then the divestiture, because that is also part of reform. Divestiture of functions that government was not performing very well. In a way I think it has worked. It is not actually perfect but it has worked. There are some functions that were not being done properly. Like Uganda Revenue Authority was under Ministry of Finance. After the reforms it was divested. And I think it is performing much better than it was in the public service. So there are some areas where things have worked. Then I think the pride. Generally the pride by civil servants to be a public servant. Originally it was like the politicians would come in, fire you, hire you as and when they wanted. But that pride, the sense of belonging to the public service. And now we as Public Service Commission, we are getting a new trend, that people are moving away, yet we are not paying -- government is not paying very much. But people are moving away now from the private, and even applying for public -- it wasn't there. They're applying for public service jobs where they know there is security, there is training. You're assured of training and development. And I think this is part of what the reform has brought about because a number of things are streamlined now.*

SCHALKWYK: And what hasn't worked very well? What have been the major problems with the management of the reform?

KAFEERO: *The management, like I said, from my experience in ROM, the sequencing. There are things that should have been done concurrently, and either at the end of the day there's firefighting. For example the retooling. I talked about the retooling. That was one thing that every civil servant looked forward to. Sitting in a good office with a nice atmosphere. And it hasn't come. For the last since 1992. To some it hasn't come. Then the pay. Pay is a little bit better. It's not yet adequate. On one hand it's better, but it is not yet adequate to address the needs of a public officer. I don't know. There are some reforms that were introduced, like there were a number of benefits that were being given by public officer, like housing, real benefits. They were all consolidated into the pay. But*

for me I think maybe as an impact, public officers, you're not going to depend on the government entirely for their -- and people built their own homes. In the past you would not find a public officer with a home. So I think it has forced people to think more. So I don't know. In one way it has affected others. It was very easy to come to government and relax, knowing that the house is assured. So it has a negative and a positive impact in that now for example there are some cadres that are supposed to be housed, like teachers. They are not housed. And so you find that maybe if you talk to people, public servants, they are now hard to live in areas. And people cannot live there. They cannot work there. For example when you go to an island, go to Kalangala, people have to live in Masaka and cross over in a boat. But if government was offering a house there maybe it would be more attractive for people to work there. For our part as Public Service Commission there is even no district service commission. They can't identify suitable people to go and live there and work there. So those are some of the things that haven't worked well.

SCHALKWYK: OK. Is there anything you'd like to add before I finish the interview?

KAFEERO: I think generally I'm not actually dissatisfied with public service, with the reforms that have taken place. It's maybe the way they have been sequenced. Then I think it was not until recently we realized that we need to review these reforms. And also another issue maybe that I would like to talk about is it is at least of recent that we have realized that even when reforms were starting we should have always had the impact in mind. But now it's so recent that whatever we do now we look at the very long term, what are these supposed -- so now I think that's why we have now developed a strategy that also looks at what will happen maybe in the next five to ten years. But then it was like in the beginning it was like firefighting. Addressing this, addressing that. But I think now there's a more focused way of looking at these reforms. However, it's very unfortunate that this has come at a time when the public and the civil servant is just tired. Just tired of reforms. Whether the intentions are good or not it becomes very difficult. It becomes very difficult now to implement. However, life has to go on.

SCHALKWYK: OK. Thank you very much.

KAFEERO: You're welcome.